



Snapshots

From the editorial advisory board

Ken Salazar seems to have found his niche as Secretary of the Interior. He really hit the ground running with his cancellation of the gas and oil drilling leases near Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. That the Bushies would make this last minute giveaway to the energy companies, some in close proximity to our natural treasures, is no surprise. But that Salazar would make such a dramatic move as his first substantive decision seems to indicate that he really is committed to protecting the environment. Although saying that there's a "new sheriff in town" may have been a bit of theater, it looks like he will also clean up the cozy relationships of some Interior Department staff with the energy companies. I say, "Good job, Ken, and keep it up."

Steve Pomerance

If "Medicare for all" gives you that intoxicating "government as nurturing parent" feeling, think again. The Camera reported that "thousands of patients" ... "will have to find new doctors" because Boulder Community Internal Medicine is closing — in part because of the "low reimbursement rates of its Medicare patients."

Expect more of this. The 2008 Medicare Trustees report says Medicare's financial outlook "continues to raise serious concerns." It will be underfunded without "very substantial increases in tax revenues and/or reductions in expenditures." "Reduction in expenditures." This means government will tell you when you can or cannot receive medical care.

"Medicare for all" will make these problems worse. As a tax-funded insurer, Medicare would drive out competition from non-government insurers and become a monopolistic insurance provider with little incentive to satisfy patients' needs.

Medicare for all means more waste. A Washington Post headline reads "Medical Fraud a Growing Problem: Medicare Pays Most Claims Without Review." Dartmouth researchers concluded that "nearly 20 percent of total Medicare expenditures" provides "no benefit in terms of survival" and that it's unlikely that the "extra spending improves the quality of life."

Government shouldn't be in the insurance business. Before Medicare retirees were buying insurance in increasing numbers. They would again if politicians phased out Medicare and lifted controls that make medical care and insurance so expensive.

But if you must have government involvement, why not replace Medicare with a voucher for private insurance? Government doesn't run its own grocery stores — it issues food stamps.

Brian T. Schwartz

It is mysterious to me that some folks get so defensive for the ridiculously excessive pay and bonuses that some executives receive. No man is so superior to another man that such pay disparities continue to be exploited, at an ever increasing pace.

Capping excessive executive pay is one way to regulate the extreme greed that is contributing to the downfall of our economy, and our standard of living as a nation.

Furthermore, the advantages and loopholes that have been exploited on Wall Street need to be addressed in order to level the playing field for us all.

It is not socialism or communism, as some fear mongers claim. It is a justified attempt by our society to regulate ourselves, so that we can all get along together in peace. That is one of the purposes of our government.

Rick Beaufait

It's nice to finally see some appropriate outrage from Obama, who just announced a mandatory salary cap of \$500,000 for any executive in a company receiving government bailout funds.

And if that is going to scare executives away, then frankly, good riddance! There are thousands of qualified people willing to put in a hard day's work heading multi-million dollar corporations for reasons that go beyond amassing personal empires of material wealth. They want to make a difference in this world. They understand that past a certain point, money provides little satisfaction. What is immensely more fulfilling is receiving the intrinsic satisfaction of using one's great power to the greatest benefit of all concerned. And those are precisely the kinds of people who should be running things.

Perhaps this will have a cleansing effect in the highest reaches of corporate power.

er. Still, old habits die hard. David Brooks wrote a piece mocking critics of these executive bailout bonuses. He jokes in a full column of unrelenting sarcasm that this is merely pure envy. That's not only in poor taste, but it betrays a complete lack of comprehension of where the outrage stems from.

Last I checked, these bailout binges believe in the free market, which rewards success and punishes failure. But where in this bailout is their punishment? All I see are millions of middle and lower class Americans losing their shirts — and seeing their taxes used to protect the extravagant lifestyles of those who deserve punishment the most.

When executives hear of Obama's new salary cap rules, they say it amounts to socialism. I've got news for you folks: A bailout is socialism!

Julian Friedland

Boulder Valley School Board member Ken Roberge told the Camera last week, "It's always good to have another pair of eyes on what we're doing." No doubt Roberge was simply giving a positive spin on the federal investigation into allegations the district discriminated against Columbine staff, parents and community members. However, he's onto something profound that he and the rest of the board should pursue.

The time is right, actually long past due, for the school board to willingly invite "eyes" on it by providing school board meetings live and archived on the Internet. Several local community governments show beautifully how this is done along with agendas and attachments.

Welcoming the "eyes" on the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights is one thing; welcoming constituent's eyes is even better. Interesting, my pioneering cable TV show of school board meetings with my commentary in the 1990s was "Eye on the BVSD."

Since my TV show took off, the district began airing school board meetings live on cable throughout the district where available. Now, poor Broomfield gets only delayed broadcasts, and only two hours at that, on Saturdays at 8 p.m. Most of the rest of the district receives live cable coverage beginning at 6:30 p.m. and on Saturdays at 2 p.m.

We'll see what the federal investigation shows about the BVSD's actions. We'll also see how serious the school board is about opening the window of its meetings to the world — and on the world's own time.

Shirley Scoville

There's little or no demonstrable proof that cutting taxes "creates jobs," the mantra asserted *ad infinitum* by some Republicans. Tax cuts to the wrong people have been tried, they have been tested, and they have been found wanting.

If you want to jump start the economy, put money in the pockets of folks who do not have financial advisors (who seek more lucrative returns overseas, in money markets or in risky stock plays). Money spent in the local economy by ordinary citizens, as opposed to the "smartest people in the room" (pick-pockets in tuxedos), has a multiplier effect that bounces like a pinball from one retail or service bumper to another four to five times before it disappears (witness the sales bump we see every time a hail storm puts money in the hands of people with damaged cars and roofs).

What our economy needs right now — the sooner, the better — is a local cash infusion. Healthcare record digitization, shovel ready infrastructure projects, small business job-creating tax incentives, and tax cuts for the "bottom" 95 percent make perfect sense. Every dollar we spend wisely to streamline our health care delivery system (enhancing preventive health care services should be a priority), is money that will help our businesses become more competitive while it reduces the social security and Medicare burden darkening our children's financial future.

Local and regional control of spending priorities, instead of lobby-driven earmarks, is the final bit of good news. Lead, follow or get out of the way, Congress.

Ed Byrne

(The Camera's editorial advisory board members are: Rick Beaufait, Anne B. Butterfield, Jimmy Calano, Ed Byrne, Clay Evans, Julian Friedland, Brian Lewis, Steve Pomerance, Marc Raizman, Brian T. Schwartz and Shirley Scoville.)

Boulder Camera © 2/9/09
CREATORS SYNDICATE
sherffus@gmail.com

With HOLD White House Cabinet Income Tax 2009

Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service

Use the IRS label. Otherwise, please print or type.

Your first name and initial Last name
If joint return, spouse's first name Last name
Home address (number and street)
City, town or post office, state and ZIP code

Your Social Security number
▲ You must enter ▲ your SSN(s) above.

Presidential Election Campaign Did your political party win the White House, and are you now being considered for a cabinet position? You Spouse

Filing Status
Check only one box.

1 Late
2 Never bothered before
3 Just too busy now
4 Don't feel like it
5 You're kidding, right?
6 Write me next year
7 Too important for this
8 Only little people pay taxes
9 All of the above

Exemptions Yes, if caught not paying taxes, I will apologize sincerely to the president and congressional confirmation committees and promise to pay disputed sum.

Income Any 'non-lobbying' lobbying paying the bills? Oh yeah, big time

Amount You Owe
NOTE: If you left 'Yes' blank in the Exemptions section, you pay nothing

Sign Here Your signature Date

Open forum

Summit Middle School Open enrollment is a fair process

In response to Mr. Mica's guest commentary in the Feb. 3 edition of the Camera, I would like to make the following points:

Summit Middle School is a completely open-enrolled school. Anyone can apply. We are proud to offer a rigorous academic curriculum that promotes high levels of student effort and academic achievement. However, we have a limited number of spots available each year and always have more applications than room available.

The current open enrollment lottery system is a fair and equitable process for determining who is admitted to our school. There is no neighborhood preference at Summit. We do, like nearly all schools in Boulder Valley School District, have a policy that gives enrollment priority to siblings of students currently at the school. In our charter, we also have a policy that assures students who have had siblings graduate from Summit are given preference. The number of students enrolled each year under this policy is small.

As a three-year school that is dependent on high levels of parental involvement and support, including a parent-run board of directors, Summit relies on the continuity of relationships and support that is provided by being able to keep families at Summit for more than three years.

Currently, 5 percent of Summit students are receiving free lunches. This is a similar percentage to many other neighborhood and charter schools in the district. Our diverse population of many ethnic, cultural, as well as socio-economic backgrounds helps create a vibrant school community. Open-enrolled schools like Summit are open to, and welcoming of, all families in the Boulder Valley School District.

DAVID B. FINELL
Principal, Summit Middle Charter School, Boulder

Washington Village

Get to work on project

Washington Village again? I've quietly observed the controversy over the past two plus years surrounding this project and, as a former employee of Wonderland Hill, I have refrained from commenting.

However, the City Council's call-up of this issue and various neighbor remarks have prompted this letter. This property is not a park, never was a park and never will be a park, so get off that rant. The school district needed the money so it sold the land. The

plan now allows for 59 percent of the property to be open space — radically more than the required 20 percent.

The financial reality of building in Boulder is that the more concessions a developer makes (i.e. fewer units, less commercial space and more open space), the more expensive the homes are going to be. The property is on Broadway — along with lots of other developments with commercial components.

Jim Leach is a longtime Boulder resident — not some greedy developer just looking to make a buck. He's your neighbor, and there's no way Wonderland Hill would have stayed with this project if it was only about money.

And, really, why bother having a planning board if its 4-to-1 approval of the redesigned project is going to be reviewed anyway? I urge the City Council to approve the project this month and let Wonderland get to work.

SHIRLEY THIELEN
Boulder

Stimulus package

Give Obama a chance

When I was in eighth grade (a rather long time ago) my teacher, Mrs. Jason, told us, "When the U.S. sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold." The whole world is watching and counting on the United States to literally, get off the dime and invest some serious cash in our own economic recovery.

Some of the "meat" of President Obama's economic stimulus bill includes the following: 1) The creation of 3 million to 4 million jobs over the next two years. 2) Doubles funding for the Department of Education — helping states to avoid hundreds of thousands of teacher layoffs. 3) The creation of thousands of green jobs and doubling our clean, renewable energy production. 4) Immediate access to affordable health care for people who are unemployed.

How sad the "business as usual" commentators and naysayers single out tiny fractions of this incredibly important bill to criticize. Their obstructionist game playing amounts to less than one ten-thousandth of the total spending... The country voted for President Obama because the good people of the United States wanted change. Now we need to stop listening to the Gloomy Gus and allow that change to happen.

SHARI MALLOY
Longmont

Nancy Pelosi

Business as usual

The next time Speaker of The House, Nancy Pelosi, appears in the Oval Office with

her patented smile and a stimulus bill passed by 100 percent of the Democratic representatives and 0 percent Republican representatives, President Obama should immediately advise Ms. Pelosi of a multiple of things prior to kicking her out of his office:

1. Approximately 47 percent of the U.S. voters did not vote for the Democratic side of the ticket.

2. One of the planks in President Obama's campaign was Bi (key word) -partisan cooperation.

3. Don't load bills with one side of the agenda at the expense of the other side. This is (supposed to be) a two-party system where all win. It takes negotiation, mutual respect, listening, understanding and compromising, which have been sorely lacking.

4. Most importantly. The president should tell Ms. Pelosi to take her bill to the shredder in the right (pun intended) wing of the White House, destroy the document, go back to the House and return with a bill that has the palatability and acceptability of both sides of the aisle. It's her job!

Being unwilling or unable to perform these tasks ... Ms. Pelosi should relinquish the title and responsibilities of Speaker of The House. The country has had eight years of single party rule. "Change" that was touted in the election of 2008 was meant to redirect that course of action not to perpetuate the same old business as usual only under a different leader.

With barely a month under their collective (both Republicans and Democrats) belts...It appears status quo has returned to the nation's capital at the continuing expense of the population that elected them.

RC LLOYD
Longmont

More online

Most of the letters we receive are available on our letter-to-the-editor blog: www.dailycamera.com/blogs/letters-editor-blog

To Write the Forum

The Camera welcomes readers' letters. Timely topics of local interest are given first preference. All letters are subject to editing.

Our guidelines:

- Letters of 300 words or fewer will receive preference
- Name, full address and daytime phone number required
- No anonymous or "open" letters
- No name-calling or ad hominem attacks
- Each writer limited to one letter a month
- e-mail submissions are processed more quickly than hard-copy letters. Plain text preferred over attachments

To reach us:

- Deliver or send letters to: Open Forum, 1048 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302
- Fax to 303-449-9358
- Phone us at 303-473-1354
- e-mail to openforum@dailycamera.com